phytosanitary norms, regarding tolerance levels of quarantine weed seeds in wheat consignments, was not accepted by India, in view of the likely threat of entry of quarantine weeds into the country, which do not exist presently in India.

Further, no import consignments, not conforming with the Phytosanitary specifications prescribed under Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) order, 2003, will be permitted entry into the country.

Price rise

61. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that poor persons in the country are suffering heavily due to heavy price rises during the last three years;

(b) if so, the comparative details thereof year-wise and item price-wise;

(c) the reasons therefor;

(d) why Government are not controlling the situation;

(e) whether it is also a fact that the price rise of many essential items are uncontrolled; and

(f) if so, how Government propose to overcome the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Prices of foodgrains, especially of wheat, pulses and edible oil had registered an increase during the year 2006-07. However, Government has taken steps to insulate the poor section of society from price rise by distribution of these commodities through PDS. It has protected the Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antodaya Anna Yojna (AAY) beneficiaries. Central Issue Prices of wheat and rice have not been revised since 1.07.2002 for APL and BPL, while the Central Issue Prices for AAY has not been revised since the launch of the scheme in December 2000.

(b) Detail of item wise average retail price at Delhi centre during the last three years is given in table below:-

Commodity	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08*
Wheat	8.58	9.42	11.08	11.50
Gram dal	22.71	25.58	35.21	33.00
Tur dal	32.17	32.58	34.25	38.50
Groundnut oil	84.92	83.00	90.00	103.25
Mustard oil	54.17	50.08	53.17	57.75
Vanaspati oil	53.67	47.92	53.58	57.25
Onion	8.46	10.25	10.17	11.38
Potato	7.67	9.00	9.71	11.00

* Prices upto July, 07

(c) Rise in prices of food articles such as wheat, pulses, edible oils, potato and onion is mainly owing to inadequate supplies in relation to demand. Demand for these commodities is growing on account of increase in population and income. Additional factors *viz.*, changes in consumption pattern and hardening of international prices also have an impact on the domestic prices of these commodities.

(d) Due to increase in prices of essential commodities during the initial months of the year 2006-07, the Government has taken a series of measures including banning of export, permitting import at zero duty of some commodities such as wheat and pulses and reduction in import duty of edible oils. These steps have been taken mainly to increase the overall availability of essential commodities within the country and contain the prices. As a result of these measures, rise in prices of some of the essential commodities has been contained. Sugar prices have declined significantly during last year mainly due to increase in production. The Government is regularly monitoring the prices of essential commodities at high level of meetings of CoS, CCP and Cabinet.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) The Government would not allow price rise in essential commodities to go out of control by taking timely steps as indicated above.

Offtake of wheat

62. SHRI K. E. ISMAIL:
SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the offtake of wheat allotted for Public Distribution System (PDS) has been very low during 2006-07;

(b) if so, the details of the allotment and offtake of wheat under PDS for 2006-07 and 2007-08, so far, State-wise; and

(c) the reasons for poor of ftake?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The offtake of wheat under Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) during the year 2006-07 was 102.52 lakh tons as against the allocation of 144.19 which is 71% of the allocation made.

(b) The State-wise allocation and offtake of wheat under Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) for the year 2006-07 and 2007-08 upto June 2007 is given the Statement (*See* below).

(c) Different reasons may contribute to low offtake of foodgrains in various States/ UTs such as local production and availability of foodgrains, resources crunch faced by States/UTs, narrow difference between prevalent market prices and issue prices under Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS), local food preferences of people, at times non-availability of railway rakes for movement, etc. Further, as TPDS allocation of foodgrains meets about half of the foodgrains (cereals) requirements of families, to meet their balance requirements in addition to TPDS offtake, the families mobilize foodgrains from other sources as well.